

*benghalensis*), Eurasian Golden Orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*), Black-headed Cuckoo-shrikes (*Coracina melanoptera*), White-browed Fantail-flycatchers (*Rhipidura aureola*), Red-vented Bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*) and Black Drongos (*Dicrurus macrocercus*). Yellow-eyed Babblers (*Chrysomma sinense*) were building a nest, and by July 14 three eggs had been laid. Rufous-backed Shrikes (*Lanius schach*) were also around, feeding chicks that had recently left their nest.

This patch contained approximately thirteen large and small Teak trees (*Tectona grandis*), eight *Lagerstroemia parviflora* trees, three *Diospyros melanoxylon* and one *Terminalia alata*, besides a few *Zizyphus* and *Lagerstroemia* bushes. The Rollers were nesting in a cavity in the *Terminalia*, the Orioles had hung their basket nest on the lower branches of the largest of the *Diospyros* and the Babbler was weaving its cone in a small *Zizyphus* bush. The others chose the shelter of two of the *Lagerstroemia* for their nest - the Fantail-flycatcher, Bulbul and Cuckoo-shrike shared the same 10 m high tree in ascending order, and the Drongo was in another similar sized tree, c. 20 m away. Ali and Ripley (COMPACT HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1987) say that some species, including orioles and bulbuls, "commonly build in the same tree as holds a Black Drongo's nest" as the latter is particularly forceful in its protection from other species. Perhaps this accounts for what seemed to be a relatively high density of nests in such a small patch. The White-browed Fantail-flycatcher is also a pugnacious defender of its territory.

Exact dates of hatching of the chicks are not recorded. By July 4, the Roller, Drongo and Oriole were all feeding chicks. The roller's chicks could not be seen and the adults proved too shy to watch closely. The Oriole's three chicks were still small and unfeathered, but the Drongo's three were already partially fledged. The fantails were first seen feeding on July 9 and the three chicks had probably only recently hatched.

The Cuckoo-shrikes' nest was spotted on July 11, although the adults had been seen carrying food a few days earlier. The bulbuls were first seen feeding only on July 15, and it seemed likely that these chicks were also recently hatched.

The Black Drongos were nesting at the fork of a branch approximately 4 m from the ground. Although I had been watching the nest off and on since my arrival and even spent time photographing them, I only saw the Bulbul come to the Drongo nest in the early morning of July 8. I cannot say for sure that it began on this day, as I was watching opportunistically and could possibly have missed it earlier. But the Drongo parents - both were feeding the chicks - were aggressive in chasing the Bulbul off when it came near the nest. The Bulbul developed a strategy of waiting nearby until both Drongo parents had fed their chicks, and then slipping in unobtrusively before they returned with the next food supply. Its arrival at the nest would herald a round of begging and it would feed a Drongo chick. On this first day, I also saw the Bulbul chase off the Yellow-eyed Babbler that was moving close to the nest tree. The Bulbul continued to feed the Drongo chicks every day after this, and we were able to photograph and film it doing so. By the evening of July 9, the two larger Drongo chicks were outside the nest and hopping along the branch; on July 10 these two were moving among the upper and lower branches of the tree, although all three were in or next to the nest by evening. The Bulbul continued to partake in the feeding. By midday of July 11, the third chick had also left the nest and from July 12 onwards, all three had left the nest tree and were moving in the neighbouring Teak trees which afforded them more cover — also from the rain. The Bulbul continued to bring food and feed them and the chicks continued to beg when they saw it nearby. The Drongo parents appeared to have got used to this arrangement too, and I saw no more aggression directed towards the Bulbul by them. Indeed, on July 12 evening, two of the chicks were sitting fairly close together and I saw one of the Drongo adults and the Bulbul on either side, hardly two feet apart, feeding almost simultaneously. The Bulbul was still following the three Drongo chicks around (by now there was no doubt of their parentage) and feeding them when we departed on July 15.

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## 15. REDISCOVERY OF THE YELLOW-THROATED BULBUL *PYCNONOTUS XANTHOLAEMUS* IN THE ANAIMALAI HILLS, WESTERN GHATS, SOUTH INDIA

The Yellow-throated Bulbul (*Pycnonotus xantholaemus*) is uncommon and patchily distributed in South India (Grimmett *et al.* 1998, Ali and Ripley 1971). The species is classified as vulnerable because

of extensive removal of its prime habitat, fuelwood extraction and quarrying (BirdLife International 2000, Collar *et al.* 1994).

In the Anaimalai Hills, the Yellow-throated Bulbul

was reported once by the Pollachi-Valparai road, just above Aliyar Dam (Kannan 1992), but could not be found again in subsequent searches (Kannan 1998). Whistler and Kinnear (1932; also cited in Ali and Ripley 1971) mention a record of 1886 in the Anaimalai Hills by W. Davison. Unfortunately, the cited reference (*Ibis*, 1886, p. 146) is wrong, so we could not examine that location for the occurrence of the Yellow-throated Bulbul.

The favoured habitats of the Yellow-throated Bulbul are hill scrub and deciduous forests (Ali 1942). Thus, the Yellow-throated Bulbul should only be expected on the drier eastern slopes of the Anaimalai Hills. In studies of the avifauna of the western and central parts of the Anaimalai Hills, in which tropical rainforest, tea gardens or cardamom and coffee plantations are dominating, the Yellow-throated Bulbul was therefore missed (Kannan 1998, Vijayan 1978, Ali 1969, Stonor 1946).

We looked for the Yellow-throated Bulbul in March, 2001 on the eastern slopes of the Anaimalai Hills. We found two birds some kilometres south of the location where Kannan (1992) observed it, near the open

channel, which supplies the Aliyar Dam with water from the western side of the Anaimalai Hills. The birds behaved like a pair: sitting side by side, feeding together, and following each other. Some days later, we located three more specimens on the steep slopes of the hills near the road Pollachi-Valparai. It seemed to us that two of these birds, again possibly paired, were hunting the third one out of their territory.

In the same area, three more species of bulbuls were found: the Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus xantholaemus*, the Red-vented Bulbul *P. cafer*, and the Yellow-browed Bulbul *P. luteolus*. The Yellow-throated Bulbul had the lowest relative abundance of the four congeneric species. At Horsley Hills (Andhra Pradesh), the same bulbuls were recorded as sympatric by Subramanya and Prasad (1996), but there the Yellow-throated Bulbul was the most abundant species.

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#### 16. ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER *MUSCICAPA DAUURICA* AT MT. ABU, RAJASTHAN

In the early afternoon of March 25, 2001 we found an Asian brown flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* near Sunset Point, Mt. Abu. The bird was busy catching insects attracted to a blossoming mango tree. It was oblivious to our presence and its attention was upon the tree for about ten minutes. It was quite easy to observe the bird as it made sallies to catch the insects in the lower tree canopy.

Being familiar with the species in south India, we were able to identify it easily. It was brownish-grey above and off-white below (including undertail coverts),

and had a uniform pale brown-grey wash across the breast and flanks. The whitish eye-ring around the striking large eyes and lore were prominent and distinctive even in the shade of the tree. The throat was conspicuously white. The bill was black, with the basal half of the lower mandible conspicuously pale. The legs and feet were blackish.

According to Ali and Ripley (1996), it is a partial migrant having a disjunct breeding range and its movements are imperfectly understood. As some birds reach their breeding grounds in the Himalaya in